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## FOLK-LORE SCRAP-BOOK.

PIGMENTS USED BY CHILDREN IN THEIR PLAY.—From an interesting article on childish sports with plants and flowers, entitled "Nature's Play-things," by Mrs. Fanny D. Bergen, of Cambridge, Mass., contained in the "Evening Transcript," Boston, Mass., April 6, 1895, we extract the following paragraphs:—

"One of the most widely spread and most fascinating play-labors among children is the making of inks or paints. The common pigweed (*Chenopodium album*) was very commonly used in our neighborhood to make a feeble green liquid. I don't remember that we ever really used it or attempted to use it, but I well recall gathering the leaves, tying up a handful of them at a time in a cloth and bruising them between two stones until by moistening the whole and squeezing we could obtain a small quantity of pale green juice. I have worked hours at a time at this pounding, squeezing, straining, and bottling to secure a small vial of the 'ink,' and felt at the end as if I had been successfully and usefully employed. I wonder if with the laying aside of childish things we always leave off the manufacture of pigweed ink? Pokeberry juice made a much richer ink and with less trouble, but on account of the reputed poisonous character of the empurpled fruit it was not very popular. Now and then some daring country schoolboy or girl did cautiously secure enough pokeberry ink to paint on the fly-leaf of a schoolbook a much conventionalized raceme of berries that, I fancy, was meant to picture the fruit from which the limner derived his color. I never saw the design elsewhere or done otherwise than with the juice pressed from the somewhat despised pokeberry. Children generally are as fond of staining their hands and faces brown with walnut juice as were the charmingly natural young dwellers in 'A Boy's Town.' The orange paint yielded by the roots of the bloodroot leads more boys to seek the plant than do the fleeting flowers, white beyond the white of most blossoms. A boy fortunate enough to possess a piece of red ochre, commonly known as keel, in my day a thing of almost priceless value in the schoolboy market, could manage any decoration calling for red or orange without the trouble of digging fresh bloodroot. He who had a bit of keel, however small, in his pocket had a treasure. I don't know why it was such a rarity. Any gravel bed was likely to supply the boy who sought the crude material, and every farmer who kept a crayon of the bought article for marking his sheep, for keeping tally at threshing time or for unexpected reckonings in the barn, where a board or the side of the barn served for slate, might easily have enriched his boys with a fragment of the coveted pigment."

VIOLET FIGHTS. — Mrs. Bergen proceeds to give an account of this pastime, which we have not before seen fully explained.

"What armies of blue violets are annually sacrificed by little people in the 'violet-fights.' Two children provide themselves with a goodly pile of these flowers, which they have purposely plucked with long stems, each combatant holds his posy by the stem, the two spurs are interlocked, then

the children simultaneously jerk the stems and off comes one or the other violet head. Once in a great while the two heads fall, so evenly matched in resistance are they. Usually, however, one conquers the other, the flowerless stem is replaced by a fresh one from the pile, and the flower battle goes on. Occasionally a soldier is so valiant and successful, as to lay low the heads of as many as a hundred or two of his enemies, but sooner or later he too is numbered with the beautiful slain. I am glad to have known of a few little girls who were too humane to take part in this ruthless play. The pastime is not only common among children throughout the United States and Canada, but is a familiar childish amusement in Japan, and a friend found that the same play was known to Indian children in the summer encampment at York Beach, Maine. The little red children say that the one whose violet conquers will be a great man. The Onondagas have a name for violets which interpreted means 'two heads entangled,' referring to the flower game."

POPPY SHOWS. — The following also is new, so far as we know. Although one would imagine that these common sports would long ago have been noted.

"A few strokes with pen and ink on the golden disk of an ox-eye daisy with some snipping of the white ray flowers and out comes a baby or an old lady, as you will, in white ruffled cap with smooth strings.

"Children sometimes make boats out of peapods. The pod is split along the midrib and held open by little sticks placed crosswise like thwarts. The craft is then manned with boatmen each made from two peas, one for the head and one for the body, held together by slender sticks, and with other sticks serving as very stiff arms and legs.

"What pretty wreaths we made of the pink or white phlox (Lady Washington we called it) the scarlet honeysuckle, or other tubular flowers, and pressed in our school-books. The dazzling blue larkspur blossoms were also linked into circles and made bright splashes in geography or grammar.

"The experience of what little girls call a 'poppy show' was not numbered among my own personal joys. A friend once gave me the following account of these brilliant spectacles: 'I possessed two pieces of glass, very nearly of a size, between which I used to place fallen poppy petals, in lovely kaleidoscopic patterns. I had to hold the glasses together very tightly not to spoil the pattern by letting them slip. When several little girls had gathered their poppy shows together on a board we used to chant when any one passed: —

Pinny, pinny, poppy show,  
Give me a pin and I'll let you know.

I don't know that any one ever accepted the enticing invitation. We varied the show at other seasons with different flowers, whole geranium blossoms or spiræa or apple-blossom petals, and many others, but we always called them poppy shows and sung the same rhyme. Some girls carried their poppy shows to school and passed them along under the desks. Other children gave their display in their barns, and one girl I knew had a tent